



Aruba's ONLY English newspaper

Perspective: Children born poor have little margin for mistakes or bad decisions, regardless of race

By GARY FIELDS
Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, La. (AP) — Alfred King was lying in the parking lot of a small apartment building, mortally wounded when police in Alexandria, Louisiana, got to the intersection of 12th and Magnolia streets shortly before 1:30 a.m., Jan. 20.

The 34-year-old was the first fatal shooting of 2023 in the small city where I grew up and a large portion of my family lives. Alfred's death was similar to some I have covered since my first in 1985, a 38-year period when hundreds of thousands of people of all races and ethnicities have died violently in the U.S. I know the details of too many of those incidents, from school shootings to a drug hit in a phone booth. I've heard the scream of a mom coming home from work and seeing her son in the street, encircled by yellow police tape. I've watched more than one mother gently touch the face of her teenage son then close the lid on the casket.



Associated Press reporter Gary Fields poses for a portrait at a public park, Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023, in Washington.

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Perspective: Children born poor have little margin for mistakes or bad decisions, regardless of race

Continued from Front

Some stories are burned into memory, like the Washington, D.C., teenager who asked his mom to send him out of the region to escape the violence. He spent years away only to come home one weekend to plan his high school graduation party and be randomly stabbed to death by a stranger.

While I know some of those back stories, Alfred's is the one I can personally trace from a decision made years ago by adults to gunshots near the end of a rundown street.

Alfred is my first cousin.

When he was 13 my wife and I tried to get legal custody of him after his mom was murdered, but his guardian said no.

I think about him often and the decision that kept him from reaching escape velocity, the things you need to go right to lift the weight of your birth circumstances off of you. Those include family, educa-

tion, jobs, friends, neighborhoods, adult interventions, hard work and good luck.

We say people can be whatever they want to be. To a degree that is true, but moving through the socioeconomic levels of America's economics-based caste system is like the Apollo moon missions of my youth. Millions of parts have to work perfectly to get you there, and back.

According to "Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Inter-generational Perspective," part of the groundbreaking Opportunity Insights project based at Harvard, only 2.5% of Black kids born to a parent or parents in the bottom quintile move to the top quintile of household income. For white kids, the figure is 10.6%. What is more likely for both is they will stay in the poorest quintile or, at best, move up one level to lower middle class. For white kids, that figure is 53.4%, and for Black kids, 75.4%.



Associated Press reporter Gary Fields poses for a portrait at a public park, Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

The focus on the statistics tends to be on the racial disparity. I see the disparity, but what I also see is that Black or white, less than half of the kids born poor move up much. Even if they make it one step, a car repair, a missed day at work or a high utility bill can begin a downward spiral. And there are millions born into that world, although we treat it like a moral failing. One measure of Census data shows more than 10.7 million children younger than 18 lived below the poverty level in 2022, and that figure is undoubtedly higher because millions more lived in places where the incomes couldn't be determined.

Millions of young people live in homes where social security payments, WIC, SNAP and TANF, various food, nutrition and income assistance programs, are the order of the day.

Poverty isn't the purview of one race. Neither is violent death. Socioeconomics is a good predictor for victimhood and criminal justice involvement, as well as deficient health care and educational outcomes.

Alfred came into the world on the bottom economic rung and when he was 13 the critical decision was made that likely kept him there. His mom had been shot to death months before in Alexandria.

My uncle, his dad, had done what he could but was broken down from working hard labor jobs, usually several at once and was living on limited income himself. He couldn't promise his son much future. The first time I met him Alfred was a thin, gangly, very shy kid who kept his head down, avoiding eye contact. He spoke softly and slowly and was the target of bullies. I don't remember him smiling — ever. Around me, at least, his nature was melancholy. For Alfred, I was the cousin who had a charmed life. The truth is, for reasons I will never comprehend, I had nearly everything go right.

We love to talk about people pulling themselves up by their boot straps. A lot of people contributed to my boots and showed me how to use the straps. There were teachers, friends, family, neighbors and luck stirred together. That mixture was added to the foundation, a ninth-grade drop out unwed mom who truly valued education who married a good man who helped her raise me.

Alfred's grades were not good. Something about the way he looked at me made me ask when he'd last had an eye exam. One optometrist visit and a pair of glasses later he could see the blackboard. My wife and I decided then. We wanted to bring him back

to Maryland where we live. We wanted legal custody so my work benefits could cover him. We also wanted to be able to make decisions on his behalf without unforeseen bureaucratic or legal barriers that might arise.

My now dead uncle said yes but his message to me was Alfred's now late-grandmother said no. Alfred was getting a government check of some sort. I don't know how much it paid or what program it was. This year I asked the Social Security Administration what it might have been and there were a couple of possibilities. As a minor, he could have been eligible for benefits because of his dead mom. It also might have been Supplemental Security Income for some health problem he had. In a place where minimum wage was \$5.15 an hour at the time and people lived on the edge of financial ruin, it did not matter how much, or for what. If you are born into a certain economic class everything goes towards basics: food, rent, utilities, clothing. Alfred stayed in Louisiana. Over the years, he reached adulthood and when I came home I would give him what cash I had, especially when he had kids of his own. By then he had a criminal record but he treated me the same and he checked on my mom: Aunt Shirley. □



To our clients and to our readers,

We sincerely thank you for your support and your friendship. We will be closed on Monday, January 1st, 2024 and will return to your doors, lobbies, and newsstands on Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024.

We wish you a joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year.

Stay safe!

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The Biden administration once more bypasses Congress on an emergency weapons sale to Israel

By **MATTHEW LEE**
AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the second time this month the Biden administration is bypassing Congress to approve an emergency weapons sale to Israel as Israel continues to prosecute its war against Hamas in Gaza under increasing international criticism.

The State Department said Friday that Secretary of State Antony Blinken had told Congress that he had made a second emergency determination covering a \$147.5 million sale for equipment, including fuses, chargers and primers, that is needed to make the 155 mm shells that Israel has already purchased function.

"Given the urgency of Israel's defensive needs, the secretary notified Congress that he had exercised his delegated authority to determine an emergency existed necessitating the immediate approval of the transfer," the department said. "The United States is committed to the security of Israel, and it is vital to U.S. national interests to ensure Israel is able to defend itself against the threats it faces," it said.

The emergency determination means the purchase will bypass the congressio-



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken deplanes at the Felipe Ángeles International Airport (AIFA) in Zumpango, on the outskirts of Mexico City, Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2023

Associated Press

nal review requirement for foreign military sales. Such determinations are rare, but not unprecedented, when administrations see an urgent need for weapons to be delivered without waiting for lawmakers' approval. Blinken made a similar decision on Dec. 9, to approve the sale to Israel of nearly 14,000 rounds of tank ammunition worth more than \$106 million.

Both moves have come as President Joe Biden's request for a nearly \$106 billion aid package for

Ukraine, Israel and other national security needs remains stalled in Congress, caught up in a debate over U.S. immigration policy and border security. Some Democratic lawmakers have spoken of making the proposed \$14.3 billion in American assistance to its Mideast ally contingent on concrete steps by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to reduce civilian casualties in Gaza during the war with Hamas. The State Department sought to counter po-

tential criticism of the sale on human rights grounds by saying it was in constant touch with Israel to emphasize the importance of minimizing civilian casualties, which have soared since Israel began its response to the Hamas attacks in Israel on Oct. 7. "We continue to strongly emphasize to the government of Israel that they must not only comply with international humanitarian law, but also take every feasible step to prevent harm to civilians," it said. "Hamas hides behind civil-

ians and has embedded itself among the civilian population, but that does not lessen Israel's responsibility and strategic imperative to distinguish between civilians and Hamas terrorists as it conducts its military operations," the department said. "This type of campaign can only be won by protecting civilians."

Bypassing Congress with emergency determinations for arms sales is an unusual step that has in the past met resistance from lawmakers, who normally have a period of time to weigh in on proposed weapons transfers and, in some cases, block them.

In May 2019, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made an emergency determination for an \$8.1 billion sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan after it became clear that the Trump administration would have trouble overcoming lawmakers' concerns about the Saudi and UAE-led war in Yemen. Pompeo came under heavy criticism for the move, which some believed may have violated the law because many of the weapons involved had yet to be built and could not be delivered urgently. □

Maine's deadliest shooting propels homicides to new high in the state



Crime scene tape still surrounds Schemengees Bar & Grille, Sunday, Oct. 29, 2023, in Lewiston, Maine.

Associated Press

By **DAVID SHARP**
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The deadliest mass shooting in Maine history propelled homicides to a new high in the state in 2023, topping 50 to shatter the previous record as the end of the year approaches, officials said. Eighteen people were killed and 13 injured in the Oct. 25 shootings in Lewiston, a stunning crime in a state that prides itself on low crime rates, and those deaths helped push the number of killings beyond the previous record of 40 killings in 1989,

said state police spokesperson Shannon Moss. As of Friday, the tally stood at 51 homicides, with several active death investigations still underway, she said. That stands in stark contrast to 2000, when there were only 11 homicides, the lowest since the state began compiling numbers. The homicides didn't end with the shootings in Lewiston by an Army reservist, Robert Card II, who died by suicide. November was also a deadly month, with at least 10 homicides, and overworked investigators needed reinforcements from state

police detectives in other parts of the state, Moss said. Homicide investigations are exceptionally painstaking and time consuming, and Moss said state police were "buried under a mountain of work."

The homicides in Maine included another mass shooting, the April killing of four people in Bowdoin by a man who'd been recently released from the Maine State Prison. Three others were shot on I-295 before the gunman's arrest. Joseph Eaton is awaiting trial on charges including four counts of murder. □

Ohio's GOP governor vetoes ban on gender-affirming care and transgender athletes in girls' sports

By **SAMANTHA HENDRICKSON** and **JULIE CARR SMYTH**
Associated Press/Report For America

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Republican Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine vetoed a measure Friday that would have banned gender-affirming care for minors, casting the action out of step with many in his own party as thoughtful, limited and “pro-life.”

He simultaneously announced plans to move to administratively ban transgender surgeries until a person is 18, and to position the state to better regulate and track gender-affirming treatments in both children and adults.

At a news conference, DeWine said he hoped the hybrid approach could win the support of legislative Republicans who immediately signaled they're considering a veto override as well as serve as a national model to states, as gender-affirming care restrictions enacted across the country in recent years face lawsuits.

The vetoed bill also would have banned transgender athletes' participation in



Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine speaks during a news conference, Friday, Dec. 29, 2023, in Columbus, Ohio.

girls' and women's sports. DeWine said he listened to people on both sides of the legislation who all “sincerely and truly believe their position best protects children,” ultimately deciding he could not support legislation that bans healthcare so many patients, families and doctors told him is saving lives.

“Ultimately, these tough, tough decisions should not be made by the government. They should not be made by the state of Ohio,” DeWine said. “They should be made by the people who love these kids the most, and that's the parents. The parents who have raised that child, the parents who have seen

that child go through agony, the parents who worry about that child every single day of their life.” The governor's veto drew swift rebukes Friday from supporters of gender-affirming care bans, both in the state and nationally. Republican Bernie Moreno, a Trump-endorsed candidate for U.S. Senate, and

Center for Christian Virtue President Aaron Baer both called on the Legislature to override his veto.

“Mike DeWine has failed Ohio, and it's our children who are going to pay the price,” Baer said in a statement.

Terry Schilling, president of the conservative American Principles Project, said in a statement that DeWine had succumbed to “egregious lies” being perpetuated about transgender care. He said history would remember that DeWine “gave into cowardice and caved to the transgender industry that is preying on so many vulnerable individuals.”

Republican state Rep. Gary Click, the bill's sponsor, commended DeWine for trying to wrap his mind around a complex problem in a short amount of time. He defended his own years of research on the bill, and said he was particularly disappointed that the ban on transgender girls playing sports could be sidelined if non-legislative solutions were pursued on gender-affirming care. □

Associated Press

2023's problems and peeves are bid a symbolic farewell at pre-New Year's Times Square event

By **ROBERT BUMSTED**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One person wanted to get past anger issues. Others sought to turn the page on medical bills, work stress, insecurities, taxes, regrets, bad habits, bad hair days, COVID-19, worrying about what other people think, and “all negativity of 2023.”

People hoping to shed those and other problems converged on Times Square Thursday for “Good Riddance Day,” a promotional pre-New Year's Eve event that offers a chance to, at least symbolically, cast away burdens, peeves and bad memories.

“The whole world is going through this. There's lots of people going through bad experiences. Wars, inflation, life has been rough. I'm just hoping for 2024 to



Magician Devonte Rosero, right, burns notes written by people in Times Square in New York, Thursday, Dec. 28, 2023.

Associated Press

just give everyone a break from those terrible things,” Angel Villaneuva of Washington said after watching his personal banes bad relationships and negative energy and experiences go up in smoke.

Previous iterations of “Good Riddance Day” have involved shredders and a dumpster. But this year, magician Devonte Rosero used a grill lighter and a flourish of his hand to quickly incinerate pieces of paper on which Villaneuva and others had written down what they wanted to put behind them.

For Carol Vera, that's fast food and unhealthy snacks,

now that she's learned she has high cholesterol levels. But on a broader level, the New Yorker is sad about conflict around the world.

“We should be focusing on humanity, instead of fighting with each other,” Vera said.

Natasha Naheir was keen to be done with college applications, school, bad hair and makeup days, and fake friends. Naheir, who was visiting from North Carolina, is excited for 2024: “There's a lot we can improve from this year,” she said.

Despite all the troubles of 2023, Villaneuva is optimistic, too. □

South Africa launches case at top U.N. court accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza

By MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — South Africa launched a case Friday at the United Nations' top court accusing Israel of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and asking the court to order Israel to halt its attacks. Israel swiftly rejected the filing "with disgust."

South Africa's submission to the International Court of Justice alleges that "acts and omissions by Israel ... are genocidal in character" as they are committed with the intent "to destroy Palestinians in Gaza" as a part of the broader Palestinian national, racial and ethnic group.

South Africa has been a fierce critic of Israel's military campaign in Gaza. Many there including President Cyril Ramaphosa have compared Israel's policies regarding Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank with South Africa's past apartheid regime of racial segregation.

South Africa asked the Hague-based court to issue an interim order for Israel to immediately suspend its military operations in Gaza. A hearing into that request is likely in the coming days or weeks. The case, if it goes



View of the Peace Palace which houses World Court in The Hague, Netherlands, on Sept. 19, 2023.

ahead, will take years, but an interim order could be issued within weeks.

The Israeli government rejected "with disgust" the genocide accusations, calling it a "blood libel." A Foreign Ministry statement said South Africa's case lacks a legal foundation and constitutes a "vile exploitation and cheapening" of the court.

Israel also accused South Africa of cooperating with Hamas, the militant group

whose Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel triggered the ongoing war in Gaza.

The statement also said Israel operates according to international law and focuses its military actions solely against Hamas, adding that the residents of Gaza are not an enemy. It asserted that it takes steps to minimize harm to civilians and to allow humanitarian aid to enter the territory.

South Africa can bring the case under the Genocide

Convention because both it and Israel are signatories to it.

Whether the case will succeed in halting the war remains to be seen. While the court's orders are legally binding, they are not always followed. In March 2022, the court ordered Russia to halt hostilities in Ukraine, a binding legal ruling that Moscow flouted as it pressed ahead with its attacks.

South Africa's foreign min-

istry said in a statement that the country is "gravely concerned with the plight of civilians caught in the present Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip due to the indiscriminate use of force and forcible removal of inhabitants."

The ministry added that there are "ongoing reports of international crimes, such as crimes against humanity and war crimes, being committed as well as reports that acts meeting the threshold of genocide or related crimes as defined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, have been and may still be committed in the context of the ongoing massacres in Gaza."

South Africa's president earlier accused Israel of war crimes and acts "tantamount to genocide." And South Africa last month pushed for the International Criminal Court, which also is based in The Hague, to investigate Israel's actions in Gaza.

The ICC prosecutes individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, while the International Court of Justice settles disputes between nations. □

Associated Press

Argentina formally announces it won't join the BRICS alliance in Milei's latest policy shift

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — Argentina formally announced Friday that it won't join the BRICS bloc of developing economies, the latest in a dramatic shift in foreign and economic policy by Argentina's new far-right populist President Javier Milei.

In a letter addressed to the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa all members of the alliance Milei said the moment was not "opportune" for Argentina to join as a full member. The letter was dated a week ago, Dec. 22, but released by the Argentine government on Friday, the last working day of 2023.

Argentina was among six countries invited in August to join the bloc made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to make an 11-nation bloc. Argentina was set to join Jan. 1, 2024.

The move comes as Argentina has been left reeling by deepening economic crisis. Milei's predecessor, former center-left president Alberto Fernandez, endorsed joining the alliance as an opportunity to reach new markets. The BRICS currently account for about 40% of the world's population and more than a quarter of the world's GDP. But economic turmoil left many in Argentina eager for change, ushering chainsaw-wielding political outsider Milei into the presidency.

Milei, who defines himself as an "anarcho-capitalist" a current within liberalism that aspires to eliminate the state has implemented a series of measures to deregulate the economy, which in recent decades has been marked by strong state interventionism. □



President-elect Javier Milei waves during a joint session of Congress to officially declare him and his running mate winners of the presidential runoff election, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2023.

Associated Press

Mexican president inaugurates centralized 'super pharmacy' to supply medicines to all of Mexico

By MARIA VERZA

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's president is inaugurating a 'super pharmacy' in a bid to end the woes of patients throughout the country who are often told they need a specific medicine but the hospital in question doesn't have it.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's solution was to outfit a big warehouse on the outskirts of Mexico City to centralize a supply and send it to hospitals throughout the country. "The pharmacy is going to be big, big, big, and it is going to have all the medications that are used in the health system," López Obrador said Friday.

The idea is that a hospital in rural Mexico can put in an order for a certain medication, which will be stored at the huge 430,000 square-foot (40,000 square meter) Mexico City warehouse. The armed forces, or the government-run pharmaceutical company Birmex, will then ship the drugs out by land, sea or air "within 24 to 48 hours," López Obrador pledged.

The question is whether Mexico can overcome its history of being bad at regulating the pharmaceutical industry, bad at buying medicines, bad at storing



Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador greets supporters as he arrives to a ceremony to launch a "mega-pharmacy" warehouse in Huehuetoca, Mexico, Friday, Dec. 29, 2023.

Associated Press

them, and bad at distributing them. Extreme centralization also hasn't helped Mexico much in the past in many areas.

The most visible face of this problem are the parents of children with cancer, who frequently stage protests because they say that in recent years chemotherapy and other drugs have been impossible to obtain. Desperate parents blocked traffic at the Mexico City airport last year, holding up a banner reading: "There

isn't any chemotherapy, treatment or medicines, have some empathy and sensitivity."

The problems have killed otherwise healthy people. Because Mexico has had problems in obtaining enough morphine, anesthesiologists in Mexico have had to carry around their own vials of the sedative, drawing multiple doses out of a single vial for routine procedures like spinal blocks during births.

In the United States, where

there is no shortage of morphine, doctors are advised to draw a single dose from a vial and throw the remainder out. But Mexico can't do that. That has led to contamination of the vials, leading to outbreaks of injection-induced meningitis in two Mexican states that have killed dozens of people, some of them Americans who sought treatment at clinics in the border city of Matamoros, across from Brownsville, Texas. To López Obrador's

credit, he mounted a major effort to obtain COVID vaccines in 2021, using the armed forces to distribute them and volunteers to help apply them, and by the end of that year just about anybody in Mexico who wanted a vaccine got one, for free.

But trying to replicate that model of centralized government purchasing and army distribution on a national scale for thousands of medications is not the same, according to Mauricio Rodríguez, a professor at the School of Medicine at Mexico's National Autonomous University.

"This is crazy," said Rodríguez, noting the government is opening the centralized warehouse without answering how the system will operate, especially for urgently-needed medications. He noted that concentrating all the drugs at one site increases risks, and could sideline some already-existing distribution systems.

Many of the problems predate López Obrador, who took office in late 2018. For decades, there have been scandals involving millions of dollars worth of medicines going out-of-date at warehouses while hospitals couldn't get them. □

France heightens security for New Year's Eve, with 90,000 police officers to be mobilized

PARIS (AP) — Security will be tight across France on New Year's Eve, with 90,000 law enforcement officers set to be deployed, domestic intelligence chief Céline Berthon said Friday. Of those, 6,000 will be in Paris, where French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said over 1.5 million people are expected to attend celebrations on the Champs-Élysées.

Speaking at a press conference, Darmanin cited a "very high terrorist threat" because, in part, of "what

is happening in Israel and Palestine," referring to the Israel-Hamas war.

Darmanin said that police for the first time will be able to use drones as part of security work, and that tens of thousands of firefighters and 5,000 soldiers would also be deployed.

New Year's Eve celebrations in Paris will center on the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, including DJ sets, fireworks and video projections on the Arc de Triomphe. The security challenge ahead of the Olympics was

highlighted when a tourist was killed in a knife attack near the Eiffel Tower on Dec. 2. Large-scale attacks such as that at the Bataclan in 2015, when Islamic extremists invaded the music hall and shot up cafe terraces, killing 130 people also loom in memory.

The knife attack raised concern in France and abroad about security for the Games that begin July 26, in just under seven months. But law enforcement officials appear eager to show off a security-ready Paris. □



Riot police officers patrol near the Eiffel Tower Monday, Dec. 30, 2019 in Paris, two days before New Year's Day.

Associated Press

Papiamentu words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a potting melt of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamentu above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamentu you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamentu means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamentu word for tourists.

Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say "hello" in Papiamentu. At least, not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?"

The word "con" in Papiamentu

means "how?" and is pronounced with a rounder "o" sounds, like in the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamentu is no different. Since Papiamentu is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

1. Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean "morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.
2. Bon tardi. In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the shortened "tardi" is used to keep



- the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.
3. Bon nochi. You guessed it, "bon nochi" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "nochi" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamentu. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used

mostly by the younger generation. However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much".

Birds of Aruba

ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The foundation publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the following pictures and

descriptions from the foundations Facebook page.

The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful things start happening in nature.

Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm.

Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.

Cabochon

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English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male) Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragdkolibrie (mannetje). Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect.



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The Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Divi Dutch Village!



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. These Ambassadors were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Emerald Ambassadors Mr. John & Mrs. Donna Macleod from Massachusetts, United States

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and

staff members of the Divi Dutch Village bestowed the Emerald Ambassador certificate to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's great people
- Aruba's food
- Aruba's nice sandy beaches
- Aruba's casinos
- Aruba's warm weather

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". ☐



Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to

use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation. Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. For today we received a lovely and fun message from Dean J Mini from Boston, Ma. He wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is.. a multigenerational love affair with the Island."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐

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thority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".

Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has

been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in

length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no



longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge".



The district of Savaneta

A quick history guide to the island's first capital

(Oranjestad)—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba—and Savaneta—around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American country. This was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However,

Aruba was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho" trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between Savaneta and Santa Cruz was made.

The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805)

During the 80-year war between The Netherlands and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company (WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curacao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa. Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams. Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business



Commandeursbaai (Commander's Bay) at Savaneta

men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.

However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

How Savaneta got its name

The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Sava-

neta was a great place to construct cattle farms. From here, the farmer culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th. □

Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Duffi" Kock.



Alonso de Ojeda



"Quebracho" (Kibrahacha) tree; used to make dye and paint

History of fishing in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Fishing has been a family tradition for ages in Aruba. Our ancestors used to fish for a living. Even though nowadays you don't see them often we still have some passionate fishermen on the island that go out every day in search for fish to feed their families and serve our local market. One of these fisherman is Gregory Wernet.

The so-called Continental Bank between Aruba and the opposite coast reaches a depth of about 650 feet. The sea is very rich in fish here. Since the time of the indigenous native people fish and other sea creatures such as turtles, octopus squids, conch and many type of crustaceans have formed a means of subsistence for the native Aruban inhabitants. Especially along the west coast of the island where the fishing grounds are settlements of fishermen. Until the arrival of the oil -industry Aruban fishermen could supply Aruba's wants.

As a source of income, however, fishing did not amount too much. In the beginning of the 1900's approximately 160 people earn their living in this branch of this industry. Rancho, which stands for a shed, nowadays east Oranjestad, was the head quarter and remains the fishermen's settlement. Savaneta, Noord, Santa Cruz all had their fishermen's villages. At a rough estimate there were about a hundred small fishing boats during that time. The Arubans were mainly engaged in coastal fishing, using rowing-boats or small sailing-boats, and lines or dragnets and canisters in shallow water. When fishing with deep-sea lines just over the bottom of the sea the boat is kept in place by means of a piece of rock serving as an anchor. The two most important species of fish by far caught in this manner are the pargo or red snappers and a variety



of groupers like the mero, jeanpao and the wowo di boyo.

Cruising off the coast the Aruban fisherman patiently waits for a fish willing to snap at the bait on the drag-line, in nets and traps. Veritable giants are sometimes caught. Barracudas weigh from 9 to 44 pounds and measure from 3 to almost 7 feet. The king-fish has a weight from 22 to 44 pounds; the moclat may tip the scales at 155, whilst garfish, having a length of nine feet, weigh over 132 pounds. Most fish caught is used for their own consumption, to feed their families and some are being sold in the market to local restaurants.

Fisherman Gregory Wernet

Gregory Wernet is a well-known fisherman from Santa Cruz. His father taught him fishing when he was a small child. Gregory has two

sons, Jordan and Jordanny, which he taught fishing too, when they were only 3 years old and he takes them fishing with him. Fishing has been a family tradition for quite a long time and even his grandson Willvion of 7 years old is following his grandfather steps. This is the sixth generation of fishermen in their family.

They go deep sea fishing. There they catch red snapper, grouper and amberjack. They usually fish for 15 hours a day, but now due to the covid-19 measurements they go fishing from 5 in the morning until 8 o'clock at night or even sometimes from 8 at night till 5 in the morning. The day before they prepare all their fishing tools such as the Lines, lures, spears, and load their boat with fishing reels, batteries, fill the gasoline tank, lights and some food and beverages. For bait he uses sardines, squid and the small

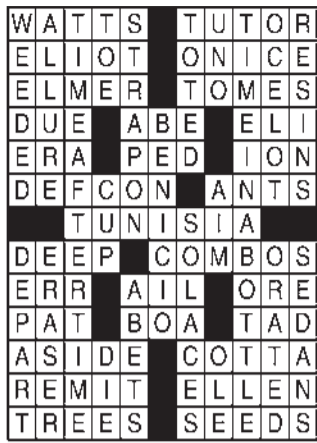
fish known in Aruba as piskechi. The have two boats they use for fishing. 'Virgen del Valle' which is parked at the pier by the Seaport and 'Padrot' which they have at home. The fish they catch they take home to their families and they also sell it to their clients. Gregory is proud to be a fisherman. It is a honest and humble job but with it he is able to feed his family even during hard times. It is a very dangerous job and you have to spend many hours on the sea, waiting patiently and risking your life while fighting a big fish and big waves but the adrenaline it brings with it but also just sitting there listening to the sound of the waves and enjoying the marvelous view that nature has to offer is all worth it. □

Source: Etnia Nativa



CROSSWORD

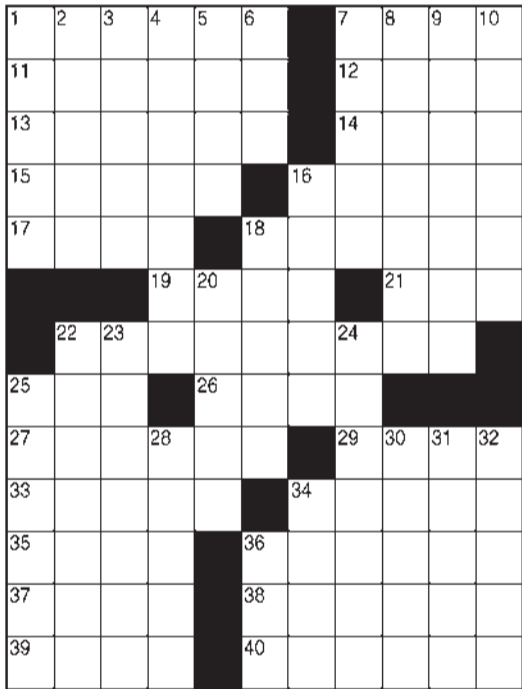
By THOMAS JOSEPH



- ACROSS**
- 1 Fighting perhaps
 - 7 Lab container
 - 11 For each narrower
 - 12 Analogy words
 - 13 Feel empathy
 - 14 Visitor to Oz
 - 15 Spoiled kids
 - 16 Dyeing art
 - 17 Lacking
 - 18 Bible dancer
 - 19 Earth circler
 - 21 For each
 - 22 Some manipulated photos and videos
 - 25 Goat sound
 - 26 Account
 - 27 Pearl producer
 - 29 Puppy sounds
 - 33 Place
 - 34 Of the kidneys
 - 35 Atlantic catches
 - 36 Garment with laces
 - 37 Handling the situation

- DOWN**
- 1 No-no on some diets
 - 2 Met work
 - 3 European fashion center
 - 4 "I have no clue"
 - 5 Play parts
 - 6 Kicker's aid
 - 7 Crucial
 - 8 Ura-nium-235, for one
 - 9 Now and then
 - 10 Attractive person
 - 16 Trite
 - 18 Up to now
 - 20 Made a choice
 - 22 Florida race site
 - 23 Entered cautiously
 - 24 Excited
 - 25 Kremlin setting
 - 28 Critical asset
 - 30 Ouzo flavor
 - 31 Track horse
 - 32 Some coasters
 - 34 Capital of Italia
 - 36 Ball club

Yesterday's answer



12-30

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-30

CRYPTOQUOTE

G D Q Z J P L C Z J A Y D P U G Z
U G Y Z J G D C W D A U G Z T Z K Y U D
R D P Z , N G L J Q Z Y L H E , " L U N L C C
F Z G K Q Q L Z Y . " — K C A Y Z W
C D Y W U Z H H T J D H

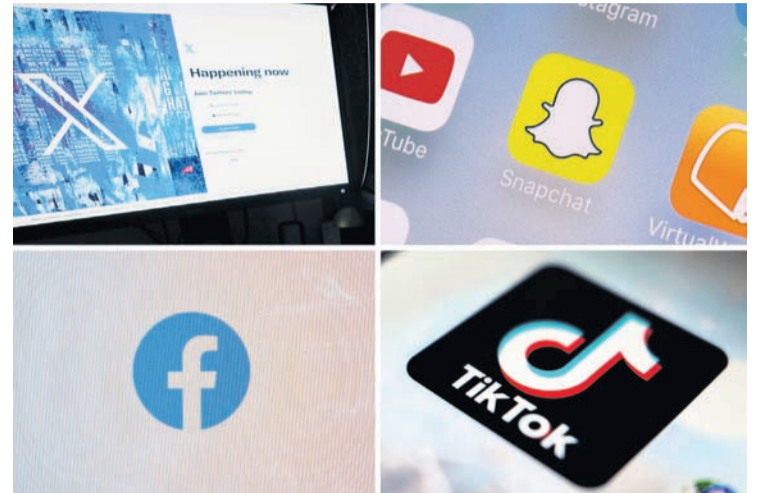
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: LET ALL THE FAILURES OF YOUR PAST YEAR BE YOUR BEST GUIDE IN THE NEW YEAR. — MEHMET MURAT ILDAN

Social media companies made \$11 billion in U.S. ad revenue from minors, Harvard study finds

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and HALELUYA HADERO
AP Technology Writers

Social media companies collectively made over \$11 billion in U.S. advertising revenue from minors last year, according to a study from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health published on Wednesday. The researchers say the findings show a need for government regulation of social media since the companies that stand to make money from children who use their platforms have failed to meaningfully self-regulate. They note such regulations, as well as greater transparency from tech companies, could help alleviate harms to youth mental health and curtail potentially harmful advertising practices that target children and adolescents.

To come up with the revenue figure, the researchers estimated the number of users under 18 on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube in 2022 based on population data from the U.S. Census and survey data from Common Sense Media and Pew Research. They then used data from research firm eMarketer, now called Insider Intelligence, and Qustodio, a parental control app, to estimate each platform's U.S. ad revenue in 2022 and the time children spent per day on each platform. After that, the researchers said they built a simulation model using



This combination of photos shows logos of X, formerly known as Twitter, top left; Snapchat, top right; Facebook, bottom left; and TikTok, bottom right.

Associated Press

the data to estimate how much ad revenue the platforms earned from minors in the U.S.

Researchers and lawmakers have long focused on the negative effects stemming from social media platforms, whose personally-tailored algorithms can drive children towards excessive use. This year, lawmakers in states like New York and Utah introduced or passed legislation that would curb social media use among kids, citing harms to youth mental health and other concerns. Meta, which owns Instagram and Facebook, is also being sued by dozens of states for allegedly contributing to the mental health crisis.

"Although social media platforms may claim that they can self-regulate their practices to reduce the harms to young people, they have yet to do so, and our study suggests they have overwhelming finan-

cial incentives to continue to delay taking meaningful steps to protect children," said Bryn Austin, a professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Harvard and a senior author on the study. The platforms themselves don't make public how much money they earn from minors.

Social media platforms are not the first to advertise to children, and parents and experts have long expressed concerns about marketing to kids online, on television and even in schools.

But online ads can be especially insidious because they can be targeted to children and because the line between ads and the content kids seek out is often blurry.

In a 2020 policy paper, the American Academy of Pediatrics said children are "uniquely vulnerable to the persuasive effects of advertising because of immature critical thinking skills and impulse inhibition."

"School-aged children and teenagers may be able to recognize advertising but often are not able to resist it when it is embedded within trusted social networks, encouraged by celebrity influencers, or delivered next to personalized content," the paper noted. □

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Penguin parents sleep for just a few seconds at a time to guard newborns, study shows

By CHRISTINA LARSON
AP Science Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a challenge for all new parents: Getting enough sleep while keeping a close eye on their newborns. For some penguins, it means thousands of mini-catnaps a day, researchers discovered.

Chinstrap penguins in Antarctica need to guard their eggs and chicks around-the-clock in crowded, noisy colonies. So they nod off thousands of times each day but only for about four seconds at a time to stay vigilant, the researchers reported Thursday in the journal Science.

These short "microsleeps," totaling around 11 hours per day, appear to be enough to keep the parents going for weeks.

"These penguins look like drowsy drivers, blinking their eyes open and shut, and they do it 24/7 for several weeks at a time," said Niels Rattenborg, a sleep researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence in Germany and co-author of the new study.

"What's surprising is that they're able to function OK and successfully raise their young," he said.

Chinstrap penguins, named for the thin line of black facial feathers resembling a chinstrap, usually lay their eggs in pebble nests in November. As with many other kinds of penguins, mated pairs share parenting duties. One parent tends to the eggs and chicks alone while the other goes off fishing for family meals.

While the adults don't face many natural predators in the breeding season, large birds called brown skuas prey on eggs and small fuzzy gray chicks. Other adults may also try to steal pebbles from nests. So the devoted parents must be always on guard.

For the first time, the scientists tracked the sleeping behavior of chinstrap penguins in an Antarctic breeding colony by at-



This image provided by Won Young Lee shows wild chinstrap penguins on King George Island, Antarctica.

Associated Press

taching sensors that measure brain waves. They collected data on 14 adults over 11 days on King George Island off the coast of Antarctica.

The idea for the study was hatched when Won Young Lee, a biologist at the Korean Polar Research Institute, noticed breeding penguins frequently blinking their eyes and apparently nodding off during his long days of field observations. But the team needed to record brain waves to confirm they were sleeping.

"For these penguins, microsleeps have some restor-

ative functions if not, they could not endure," he said. The researchers did not collect sleep data outside the breeding season, but they hypothesize that the penguins may sleep in longer intervals at other times of the year.

"We don't know yet if the benefits of microsleep are the same as for long consolidated sleep," said Paul-Antoine Libourel, a co-author and sleep researcher at the Neuroscience Research Center of Lyon in France. They also don't know if other penguin species sleep in a similar frag-

mented fashion. Scientists have documented a few other animals with special sleeping adaptations. While flying, frigatebirds can sleep one half of their brain at a time, and northern elephant seals can nap for 10 or 15 minutes at a time during deep dives, for example. But chinstrap penguin microsleeps appear to be a new extreme, researchers say.

"Penguins live in a high-stress environment. They breed in crowded colonies, and all their predators are there at the same time," said Daniel Paranhos Zitterbart, who studies penguins at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts and was not involved in the study. Microsleeping is "an amazing adaptation" to enable near constant vigilance, he said. □

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Amid 28-game losing streak, Detroit showed it can compete with NBA's best

By **JIMMY GOLEN**

AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Detroit coach Monty Williams has believed it for a while, and now he has proof: The Pistons can compete with anybody in the NBA.

And, he can only hope, the wins will come soon enough. The Pistons opened a 21-point lead over the league-best Celtics on Thursday night, forcing overtime before Boston pulled out a 128-122 victory and sent Detroit to an NBA record-tying 28th loss in a row. "As bad as they hurt right now, I hurt for them," Williams said. "But I told them: 'If we bring that kind of toughness and execution minus the turnovers we're not just going to win one game. We're going to put something together.'"

It was the first time all season the Pistons led by more than 20 points, and the first time they had gotten to overtime in the two months since their last win. Detroit has also lost to Miami by one point, Milwaukee by two and defending champion Denver by four points this season.

"We're on the same level as



Detroit Pistons forward Bojan Bogdanovic (44) and guard Cade Cunningham (2) return to the court during the fourth quarter of the team's NBA basketball game against the Brooklyn Nets on Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2023, in Detroit.

Associated Press

all these teams were playing against," said Detroit guard Cade Cunningham, who had 31 points and nine assists but missed a potential winning 3-pointer at the end of regulation.

"There's no team that I've ever come across in the NBA where I felt like I was going into a slaughterhouse. I've never felt like

that in my life, going into a basketball game," he said. "So every game we should be able to fight teams and impose our will on them. We did that early on. We kind of let go of the rope a little bit in the third quarter. But there's a lot of growth, and something we can learn from and definitely take to the next game." Detroit fell

to 2-29 and matched the "Trust the Process" Philadelphia 76ers with the 28 consecutive losses; the Pistons need a victory at home against Toronto on Saturday night to avoid breaking the NBA record for longest losing streak. In major North American sports, only the NFL's Chicago Cardinals, who lost 29 straight

from 1942-45, have had a longer losing streak.

"I'm not interested in just winning one more game this year you know what I mean? To stop this. That would be soft, in my opinion," Cunningham said. "Our goals are a lot higher than that. We have what it takes to win a game, that's nothing. But to put games together, to find our system, find what's clicking and allow us to sustain winning. That's all we're looking for." Kristaps Porzingis had eight of his season-high 35 points in a 10-0 run that turned a four-point deficit into a 106-100 Boston lead in the final two minutes of regulation. Jaden Ivey scored six straight points for Detroit to tie it. Then, after Jayson Tatum was credited with a layup on a replay-confirmed goaltending call, Bojan Bogdanovic made a putback on Cunningham's missed 3 to send it to OT. Derrick White scored 10 of his 23 points in the extra period and Porzingis had six in the overtime dunking after a full-court pass from Tatum and then sinking a pair of free throws to make it 125-117. □

Rafael Nadal is trying to be realistic ahead of his 1st tournament in a year at Brisbane

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — a lot of pressure on himself Rafael Nadal is not putting ahead of his first tourna-



Rafael Nadal of Spain hits a ball into the crowd during a public appearance in the Queen Street Mall ahead of the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane, Australia, Friday, Dec. 29, 2023.

Associated Press

ment in more than a year. The 37-year-old Spanish lefthander is set to return at the Brisbane International next week after almost a year out with a hip injury. The 22-time Grand Slam singles champion's last match was a second-round loss at the Australian Open in January, and Nadal eventually decided to have surgery on his troublesome hip in June.

Thousands queued for a glimpse of Nadal on Friday at a fan appearance in downtown Brisbane when Nadal was keen to play down the prospect of a title in the Queensland state capital or a third Australian

Open crown beginning Jan. 14 in Melbourne.

"It's impossible to think about winning tournaments today," he said. "What's really possible is to enjoy the comeback. I don't expect much one year without being on the court."

But he was quick to mention his Melbourne Park wins when prompted, two against-the-odds titles won in 2009 and 2022 that set aside the current world No. 672's low expectations.

In 2009 he outlasted countryman Fernando Verdasco over five hours in the semi-final before beating Roger Federer two days later in a

four-hour final.

Thirteen years later, after six months sidelined with a foot injury, he came from two sets behind to beat Daniil Medvedev in the final.

"I still don't know," he said of how he won that 2009 title. "Before the match it was impossible to imagine myself winning that match."

Nadal has said 2024 is "probably going to be my last year on the professional tour."

But he said he was encouraged by his fitness, confessing he feels "much better than what I expected a month ago." □

Switching from one side of the offensive line to the other is among the NFL's underrated tough tasks

By ROB MAADDI

AP Pro Football Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Driving a car with the opposite foot or shaving with the other hand would be major challenges for anyone.

That's how offensive linemen describe moving from right tackle to left tackle and vice versa. It's a new position that requires different footwork, hand-and-eye coordination and other techniques all while trying to keep strong and speedy edge rushers from annihilating their quarterback.

Tampa Bay's Tristan Wirfs and Cincinnati's Jonah Williams are among the players who've made that difficult switch this season. Detroit's Penei Sewell has gone back and forth.

It's one of the toughest transitions for an NFL player that's often overlooked because of the assumption that offensive linemen all do the same thing. Yes, linemen have to block. But each guy on the line has different responsibilities and major adjustments are necessary.

"You have so many reps on one side and it's muscle memory but then all of sudden you have to do every-



Detroit Lions offensive tackle Penei Sewell (58) and quarterback Jared Goff (16) run to running back Jahmyr Gibbs after his touchdown during the first half of an NFL football game against the Denver Broncos, Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023, in Detroit.

thing the other way and it feels weird," said Wirfs, who was a first-team All-Pro at right tackle in 2021 and made two Pro Bowls at that spot before jumping over to the left side. "The more you do it, the more comfortable you get. But it does suck off the rip. You feel very awkward and it just takes some getting used to. It's easy to get very frustrated with yourself because you had success on

this side. But I've got great guys around me."

Wirfs, a first-round pick by the Buccaneers in 2020, credits offensive line coach Joe Gilbert for helping make his transition smoother.

"He said: 'I'm not going to let you fail. You'll be all right,'" Wirfs said.

"I'm still getting there. There's some days where you feel great and some days you're like, 'What am

I doing?' But I'm definitely more comfortable than I thought."

Williams, the 11th overall pick by Cincinnati in 2019, played left tackle at Alabama and throughout his first three years with the Bengals until moving to the right side this season.

"I think in the NFL and especially at o-line, technique is just so important and so ingrained in you and it's not just knowing the technique,

it's feeling it and your feet and your weight distribution and everything like that so it's not as easy as just saying now I'm going to do it the other way," Williams said.

"It takes a lot of practice and time."

Williams was coming off surgery for a dislocated kneecap so he was limited in the offseason but made sure he prepared the best he can.

"Even if I was just going out there and kind of just getting in a stance and holding it for a while each day, that was at least something I could do to start kind of switching my brain over to that side," Williams said.

"And, fortunately, by the time camp rolled around, I was pretty comfortable with it and I've just gotten more comfortable with it all year." Sewell, the seventh overall pick by Detroit in 2021, was a left tackle at Oregon when he won the Outland Trophy as the nation's best offensive lineman. He moved to the right side after the Lions drafted him only to make his first career start at left tackle, becoming the youngest player in NFL history at age 20 to start at that position. □

Associated Press

U.S. routs Swiss 11-3 at world juniors behind hat trick from Snuggerud; Sweden posts second shutout



USA's Jimmy Snuggerud, right, celebrates scoring with teammate Rutger McGroarty during the group B ice hockey match between Switzerland and USA at the IIHF World Junior Hockey Championship in Gothenburg, Sweden on Thursday, Dec. 28, 2023.

GOTHENBURG, Sweden (AP) — Jimmy Snuggerud scored three goals for a natural hat trick in the first 12 minutes to help the United States rout Switzerland 11-3 on Thursday in the world junior hockey championship.

Will Smith opened the rout 1:20 into the game off a cross-ice pass from Zeev Buium for a one-timer near the net. Snuggerud got his first two minutes later and the University of Minnesota star added goals at 8:11 and 12:36.

Tied with Slovakia for the Group B lead, the U.S. (2-0) led 9-1 after two periods. The Americans outshot Switzerland 40-24, with Jacob Fowler making 21 saves.

"I liked our start," coach David Carle said. "We made them uncomfortable early and that was important. It was a good win and now we'll turn our attention to an excellent Czech team."

Snuggerud also had an assist. Gavin Brindley had two goals and an assist, and Buium, Ryan Leonard, Isaac Howard, Quinn Finley and Eric Pohlkamp also scored, and Frank Nazar III had four assists, and Cuttre Gauthier had three.

On Friday at Frolundaborg Arena, the U.S. will play a Czech Republic team that is 1-1 and coming off an 8-1 rout of Norway on Wednesday.

In the only other game Thursday, Sweden beat Germany 5-0 in Group A at the Scandinavium. Otto Stenborg had three goals and Melker Thelin made 15 saves.

The Swedes (2-0) have outscored their opponents 11-0 so far in the tournament ahead of a Friday night showdown with Canada (2-0). □

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